*The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde

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**Summary**

Basil visits Dorian’s home after hearing of Sybil Vane’s death (and the rumor that Dorian attended the opera the same day) to find him completely unaffected. Basil expresses his disappointment in Dorian’s apathetic attitude, which prompts Dorian to argue that he is a man now, and Basil must accept these changes. Basil blames his change on Lord Henry’s influence, but eventually surrenders, accepting that Dorian is no longer the innocent friend he once knew. Basil then declares that he intends to display the portrait of Dorian at his exhibit (which he had previously said he would not do), infuriating Dorian. Basil explains that he had been infatuated with Dorian during the creation of the portrait and for weeks after, and had once hesitated to display the portrait because he felt that he had bared too much of his soul in its creation. Basil felt that if he displayed the picture, people would understand this obsession, but eventually decided that as his best piece, it was too much of a treasure not to display. Dorian is enraged and refuses, going so far as to lock the portrait in his childhood playroom to prevent prying eyes from seeing it. The inquest of Sybil Vane occurs and is released in the newspaper, with no connection to Dorian mentioned. Finally, Dorian receives a book from Lord Henry with no plot and one character. The book is about a young Parisian who devotes his life to “passions and modes” of other centuries, which is an eerie reflection of Dorian’s present. Dorian spends hours reading, expressing that the book had utterly fascinated him – but he did not like it.

**Analysis**

Dorian’s heartlessness seems to become more and more prevalent as the novel goes on. He’s been corrupted by the life that Lord Henry introduced him to, and it’s sad to see him develop in such a manner. Basil seems to be such a good man. Though Dorian has treated him poorly, Basil stands by because he loves Dorian, and that’s pretty admirable. When they argued about the painting, I became worried about Dorian. He became obsessive and paranoid, in a really creepy manner. I could absolutely foresee Dorian “snapping” one day. He’s been manipulated so much (by Henry) that he seems to be completely lost. I do believe that Basil has finally given up on Dorian and knows he is a lost cause, as well.

**Application**

The loss of innocence was the most prevalent theme of this section (though it is an undertone of the book overall). While during the last two sections, Dorian has been introduced to a whole new world by Henry and experienced love (and loss), he is the most changed in this part. This section was the most obvious in terms of his loss of innocence when he was unsympathetic at the death of his fiancée, Sybil Vane. Dorian, once so caring and trusting, had almost no remorse from her suicide, and convinced himself that he was not responsible. Later, Dorian became unreasonably angry, with periods of paranoia and obsessive distrust – characteristics not usually carried by the innocent mind of a child (or the inexperienced in general). The loss of innocence is an unavoidable part of life, but Dorian’s loss of innocence has almost twisted his mind.